

## Message Text

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ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 FDRE-00 EA-06 OPR-02 A-01

H-02 SCA-01 AID-05 VO-03 SR-02 ORM-01 SS-15 INRE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 /066 W

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O 291350Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8559

CONFIDENTIAL CARACAS 4474

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: AEMG VE

SUBJ: RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: STATE 97854

1. VENEZUELA HAS FELT REMOTE FROM VIETNAM AND THEREFORE LOCAL  
INTEREST IN AND CONCERN FOR EVENTS IN THAT COUNTRY HAVE NOT BEEN  
GREAT. GIVEN THE PROBLEM OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT,  
ESPECIALLY AMONG UNSKILLED WORKERS (PRESIDENT PEREZ PUBLICLY  
CLAIMS 16 PERCENT OF THE LABOR FORCE IS UNEMPLOYED OR UNDER-  
EMPLOYED); THE EXISTENCE OF PERHAPS HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF  
ILLEGAL ALIENS, MOSTLY COLOMBIANS, IN VENEZUELA; AND VENEZUELA'S  
NATURAL AFFINITY FOR IMMIGRANTS OF EUROPEAN, ESPECIALLY LATIN,  
ORIGIN, UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES VENEZUELA WOULD PROBABLY  
NOT BE GREATLY INTERESTED IN RECEIVING A NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHOSE  
BACKGROUND IS SO DISSIMILAR TO THAT OF THE IMMIGRANTS  
VENEZUELA HAS CUSTOMARILY RECEIVED, ESPECIALLY IF THE GOV HAD TO  
PROVIDE FINANCIAL AID TO GET THE REFUGEES ON THEIR FEET AFTER  
THEIR ARRIVAL.

2. HOWEVER, THE PLIGHT OF THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES, ESPECIALLY THE  
ORPHANS, HAS STRUCK A SYMPATHETIC CHORD AMONG MANY VENEZUELANS  
(THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED A NUMBER OF INQUIRIES CONCERNING  
ADOPTION). IN ADDITION, AS THE DEPT IS AWARE, PRESIDENT PEREZ  
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HAS EMBARKED UPON A CONCERTED EFFORT FOR VENEZUELA TO ASSERT

LEADERSHIP IN THE HEMISPHERE AND TO EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE THIRD WORLD. PRESIDENT PEREZ IS ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT OIL-RICH VENEZUELA'S IMAGE IN THE WORLD, AND IS SEEKING TO IMPROVE IT.

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE KEY TO A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM THE GOV IN THIS MATTER IS TO ATTRACT THE INTEREST OF PRESIDENT PEREZ, WHO IS INVOLVED IN ALL KEY DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE GOV. WE THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT IF WE WERE TO BE PROVIDED WITH A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT TO PRESIDENT PEREZ ASKING HIS ASSISTANCE IN RE-SETTLING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES IN VENEZUELA, PEREZ MIGHT VERY WELL MAKE A POSITIVE RESPONSE, SEIZING UPON THE OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER HIS FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES BY DEMONSTRATING TO THE WORLD VENEZUELA'S HUMANITARIAN CONCERN FOR VICTIMS OF MISFORTUNE AND VENEZUELA'S ABILITY, VIA ITS RAPIDLY- DEVELOPING ECONOMY, TO ABSORB NEW SETTLERS. A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, IN ADDITION TO OBTAINING THE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF AND THEREFORE REACTION FROM THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF GOVT HERE, WOULD ALSO UNDER-SCORE THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH THE USG VIEWS THE PROBLEM AND OUR EFFORTS TO MEET IT.

4. WE WILL DELAY OUR APPROACH TO THE GOV ON THIS MATTER UNTIL WE RECEIVE THE DEPT'S RESPONSE.

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## Message Attributes

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